

WINE News

Bordeaux: What's drinking well now, what to cellar—and 2014 both ways.



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Bordeaux Bargains in a Nutshell

By Clyde Beffa Jr.



We have only four pages for Bordeaux this month and our Bordeaux inventory is at its highest in many years. So, there's no time for lengthy stories—just the facts. In this issue, we have Bordeaux veteran Ralph Sands on page 2 talking about Léoville-Barton; Steve Bearden and Jacques Moreira are on page 3 with some of their faves; and Jeff Garneau is on page 4 with some great 2014 values.

Here are three great buys on the value side of the equation from the 2016 Bordeaux campaign, which has just finished.

2016 Tour St-Christophe, St-Emilion (PA \$26.99) Our good friend James Suckling is right on with this beauty. **96-97 JS:** "Elegance with power. Full-bodied, intense and forthright. Wonderful length and depth. Better than the 2015." We agree, but 2015 is *very good*, too.

2016 Siran, Margaux (PA \$29.99) These guys are on a roll of late. This one is also as good as their 2015. Toasty oak and tobacco aromas. Soft and sweet on the palate—the best value of the vintage?

2016 Cantemerle, Haut-Médoc (PA \$29.99) Definitely right up there with their 2015. **WE** and **JS** score it **94** or more—so do I. So pure, so lively, so delicious already. Mr. Dambrine is doing quite well, thank you.

And before I go any further, I must mention some wines that are stunning values—a couple of them are in my cellar:

2009 Puygueraud, Côtes de Francs (\$19.99) 92 JS: "Violets and blackberries with hints of spices on the nose. Full body, with soft

and velvety tannins and a juicy finish. Drink now or hold. Always an excellent value." I love this wine—sweet and lovely, a bit modern and 100% delicious. Nicolas Thienpont is the great winemaker here.

2009 Branas Grand Poujeaux, Moulis (\$29.99) On the everyday drinking side of the equation, this wine can't be beat. A toasty, coffee aroma with loads of cassis, smoke, incense and licorice on the palate. Quite elegant and sweet like the great 2009s we have grown to love. A Robert Parker "sleeper" of the vintage.

2010 Josephine de Boyd, Margaux (\$29.99) This is one of the second labels of Château Boyd-Cantenac along with Jacques Boyd. An elegant 2010—feminine style with some violets on the nose and red fruit flavors.

2011 l'Arrose, St-Emilion (\$34.99) I actually liked this wine better than their 2010 or 2012 (last vintage at Arrose). It has fine structure and plenty of blackberry and spice on the nose and palate.

One Special Wine Here

2012 Pauillac de Latour, Pauillac (\$69.99) We tasted this wonderful wine at Château Latour in April and were astonished at just how good it was. Some of us preferred it to the Les Forts. The wine is so pure and polished with tons of spice and earth on the palate. I like it better than the 2010 or 2009—and that is saying something. A must-buy for this third wine of Latour.



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Oldies and Goodies Priced Under \$80

One of our specialties is finding great-tasting Bordeaux wines for excellent prices, some from great vintages and some from not-so-great vintages.

2004 Villars, Fronsac (\$12.99) Sexy aromas of dark plum and cassia with vanilla and minerals. Fresh and pure in the mouth, with lively, delicately spicy blackberry flavor. Superb wine from a classic vintage.

2005 Verdignan, Haut-Médoc (\$19.99) One of our old-time favorites along with Coufran. **90 WS:** “Dark in color, with lots of blackberry, mineral, licorice and a hint of toasty oak. Full-bodied, with velvety tannins and a long, caressing finish. Balanced and generous, with lots of fruit underneath.” We have sold over 3,600 bottles of this.

2007 Tronquoy-Lalande, St-Estèphe (\$27.99) A great value property run by the Montrose people. We love 2007 like 1997, but 2007 is better. Red berries, licorice, flowers and spices on the nose. Supple and sweet.

2005 Langoa-Barton, St-Julien (\$79.99; OWC-12 \$959.00) A fabulous buy from this great vintage. These cases came directly from the property. **93 RP:** “The Château Langoa Barton 2005 offers plenty of concentration on the nose: blackberries, blueberry, a touch of cedar and tobacco emerging from the glass, opening and gaining intensity all the time.”

2014 Bordeaux: The Last of the Value Vintages?

Because of the low opening prices and the strength of the dollar then, these are the best wines for the price Bordeaux has to offer.

2014 Segonzac Blaye Côtes de Bordeaux Vieilles Vignes (\$9.99)

The folks at Château Segonzac are sticklers for quality. The careful selection process at Segonzac helps to create concentrated, full-flavored wines. The bright lush fruit is balanced with plenty of ripe tannins. Enjoy the Segonzac with a classic steak Diane.

2014 Haut de Poujeaux, Haut-Médoc (\$18.99) Poujeaux has at least two second wines—Salle de Poujeaux and this one. We have carried both and have found no difference in the quality. Toasty, oaky aromas. After decanting the wine opens up to a red fruit-forward beauty.

2014 Cantemerle, Haut-Médoc (\$27.99) Bright and racy. Red currant and plum fruit and a lively tang of iron through the finish. **94 WS**

2014 Fleur de Pedesclaux, Pauillac (\$27.99) The second wine of the hottest new Pauillac, Pedesclaux. A more flowery wine with good red fruit flavors and some tannin to shed.

2014 Barde-Haut, St-Emilion (\$29.99) 94 VN: “The 2014 Barde-Haut has turned out beautifully. Dark cherry, mocha, spice, leather and tobacco flesh out in the glass. Effortless, supple and nicely layered, the 2014 hits all the right notes.”

2014 Domaine de l'A, Côtes de Castillon (\$29.99) From a 15-acre parcel owned by renowned winemaking guru Stephane Derenoncourt, this wine is 60% Merlot with 25% Cabernet Franc and 15% Cabernet Sauvignon. Back fruits dominate here—long, lingering finish.

2014 Murmure de Larcis Ducasse, St-Emilion (\$29.99) Another bargain from Nicolas Thienpont, this second wine of Larcis is 98% Merlot. Asian spice aromas and flavors. Lush and sexy, sweet as can be.

The Barton Legacy Thrives!

By Ralph Sands



Wine, like art, music and fashion, is so very personal and subjective. When I made my first of 50 trips to Bordeaux with Clyde in April of 1990, I was 34 and my palate definitely favored masculine wines with loads of dark fruit, which is why I immediately fell in love with the wines made by Anthony Barton at second growth Château Léoville-Barton in St-Julien. I found the wines to be

a pretty good reflection of the man himself—serious, bold and savvy from the outside, but brisk, fresh and extremely lively on the inside. Much like our conversations every year!

As the 1990s progressed, so did our relationship. The Barton wines continued to spike upward dramatically in sales here, even in very difficult vintages like 1993 and **1994 (\$109.99)** because of the consistent quality of the wine. The 1995 is a spectacular wine and one of my all-time favorites! After the 1995, Barton was really rolling here. The 1996 was classically structured and enjoyed great reviews. The reasonably priced 2000 vintage sold out immediately.

Léoville-Barton is the greatest wine for the money in Bordeaux, every vintage. Always making reasonably priced wines, Anthony is the only

person I have ever heard say, “I hope I don’t get 100 points, because if that happens the wine will be resold at high prices and become a dust collector.” He wants people to drink and enjoy his wine!

So it is no surprise that I have bought and consumed more Léoville-Barton than any other wine in my career. The Barton wines from the current run of fine vintages are stylistically dead-on: attractive, dark blue fruit with good power, lively acidity, great freshness and perfectly balanced. The **2014 (\$69.99)** reminds me of the fine 2001, **2015 (PA \$76.99)** reminds me of 2005 and **2016 (PA \$84.99)** a bit of ’09 plus ’10. The soil never moves and the style does not change—only the weather changes.

We have a nice selection of the Barton wines in **Original Wooden Case (OWC)** and just now back in stock are the lovely and forward **2012 Léoville-Barton, St-Julien (\$79.99)**, which I would still age 7–10 years, and the marvelous **2009 (\$134.99)** that possesses huge amounts of sweet, rich fruit with great mid-palate texture and a long finish found only in the greatest of Bordeaux wines. Put some in your cellar.



Steve's Standouts: the 2014 Bordeaux Vintage

By Steve Bearden



As we taste our way through the 2014 vintage Bordeaux that are flooding into our stores, we are encountering wines that taste sweet, ripe, fresh and remarkably complete for such a young age. Here is a quick snapshot of some standouts.

2014 Malartic-Lagravière, Pessac-Léognan (\$44.99)

This property has really stepped up their game and this might be their best release to date. The 2014 is a wine of richness and depth showing off sweet currant and black raspberry fruit, flowers, spice and a dark edge to the persistent mineral finish. This big, lively and balanced wine will age beautifully but is delicious already.

2014 La Reserve de Malartic, Pessac-Léognan (\$19.99)

The second wine of Malartic-Lagravière is a flattering wine to drink while you age the Grand Vin. This is toasty and ripe with an array of red fruits in a delicious and forward style. There is lots of complexity and pedigree here for not much money.

2014 Montrose, St-Estèphe (\$129.99) Refined, classy and substantial, with balanced structure and a depth of fruit, this is one of the best Left Bank wines of the vintage and is just beginning to reveal the complexity of red and black fruits embedded in the taut and



poised body. The gloriously warm Indian summer and ideal harvest conditions are evident in every sip of this sophisticated powerhouse.

2014 Le St-Estèphe de Montrose, St-Estèphe (\$26.99) The third wine of Château Montrose has some of the power of the Grande Vin but at a more approachable price. Scents and flavors of bright Bing cherries, earth, leather, sweet dark fruits and flowers expand as this takes on air. The finish is long and fresh in this wine of impeccable pedigree. Decanting for at least an hour is highly recommended.

2014 de Landiras Rouge, Graves (\$12.99) This screaming value is a great introduction to the 2014 vintage with its chocolate-tinged red and black fruits and classic Graves finish of wet mineral. This is not a modern fruit bomb but rather a toasty, fresh and balanced wine of surprising length and proportion.

And One Spectacular 2004, Just for Fun

2004 Malescasse, Haut-Médoc (\$16.99) At 10 years old the 2004 vintage Bordeaux have finally turned a corner and are becoming the delicious values we always thought they would be. This is lively, fresh and expressive with bright flavors of ripe cherries, baked rhubarb and red licorice crammed into the rich middle. On the finish there's earth, spice box and faint hints of leather. This is a delicious decade-old bargain to drink tonight.



The 2014s Sont Arrivées!

By Jacques Moreira



And they are fresh, lifted and very well priced. Much has been said about the "glorious September-October" that defined—or saved—this attractive vintage. The fact that the fruit ripened with a very good level of acidity was the key factor for the well balanced, if not powerhouse, wines.

The two-and-a-half years they spent resting in their châteaux's cellars gave them weight and a more defined, firm structure, with most still in need of some cellar time to come around.

2014 Brown Rouge, Pessac-Léognan (\$21.99) Here is a château that delivers a wine of stunning quality year in and year out. Very reliable and a good candidate for an easily 15–20 year séjour in the cellars. It's a full-bodied wine, with notes of coffee and brown sugar along with dark berries and spices. Decant if you drink it now. **92 WS**

2014 Deyrem Valentin, Margaux (\$21.99) A textbook Margaux wine with its classic floral notes of violets and cassis. It is very aromatic and an absolute pleasure to drink right now. It does need a good decanting to coax all it has to offer to the forefront, but it is all there. One of our outstanding values for Margaux. **90 RP**

2014 La Fleur Peyrabon, Pauillac (\$24.99) La Fleur Peyrabon is not, as some may think, the second wine of Peyrabon, but from a separate parcel on excellent terroir with gravelly soil, and vinified and bottled separately. A structured, Cabernet-based wine that is approachable and cellar-worthy at the same time, this shows lifted floral tones along with the richness one expects from a Pauillac. **92 WE**

2014 Rauzan-Ségla, Margaux (\$69.99) That is a Margaux I would put in the cellar for at least 10 years—the wine has the potential for developing into a real beauty. The structure, along with its fruit, the acidity and silk tannins, are all there, in perfect balance. A very elegant wine.

2014 La Dauphine, Fronsac (\$19.99) From one of my favorite appellations on the Right Bank comes this delicious wine meant to be drunk young. It is rich, but never heavy. Cocoa, espresso beans, cherries and plums abound—a great wine to take to a dinner party. Fronsac wines rarely disappoint me, with their velvety texture and approachability. It's a great region for those searching for affordable Right Bank. La Dauphine delivers it all, once again!





Riffing on the 2014 Vintage in Pessac-Léognan and Graves

By Jeff Garneau



The 2014 vintage, with a cooler than average July and August and postcard-perfect Indian summer weather in September and October, produced some spectacular whites and reds, especially in the Graves. The lively acidity and ripe, sweet fruit typical of the vintage are complemented by the distinctive minerality peculiar to the wines of the region.

Some of the most exciting dry white wines from Bordeaux these days are made by châteaux whose reputation is founded on the production of sweet wines. Of course, the same grapes that yield those remarkably rich, unctuously sweet wines—Sémillon and Sauvignon Blanc—can also be put to use making dry whites of astonishing complexity. The **2014 Guiraud “G” Bordeaux Blanc Sec (\$16.99)** is a fine example. From one of the top producers in Sauternes, this blend of 70% Sauvignon Blanc and 30% Sémillon is quite dry in style. Taut, mineral-driven, with admirable intensity, it nonetheless offers plenty of ripe stone fruits. Barrel aging adds a bit of texture.



Domaine de Chevalier, famous for its white wine, produced an outstanding red in the **2014 Domaine de Chevalier Rouge, Pessac-Léognan (\$49.99)**. Still very youthful with notable depth of color and hints of oak spice and smoke on the nose, it combines lively acidity with ripe, sweet fruit; a rich texture and full body with firm, fine tannins. This is but the first in a trio of remarkable vintages, and inarguably the best value. Olivier Bernard and his team are at the top of their game here, with all of the improvements made during his 30-plus-year tenure yielding some of the best wines ever made at this estate.

Not to be outdone, neighboring Château Haut-Bailly amply demonstrates the potential of the vintage with the **2014 Haut-Bailly, Pessac-Léognan (\$79.99)**. Toasty oak on the nose with loads of bright, sweet, perfectly ripe fruit. Very fresh with lively acidity and fine tannins. An exquisitely polished, classic Graves red. 66% Cabernet Sauvignon.

The **2007 Haut-Bailly, Pessac-Léognan (\$69.99)** was the result of another late vintage, cooler and wetter through the summer months, but saved by the return of warm, dry weather in September and October. Again, the delayed harvest favored the later-ripening Cabernet Sauvignon (70% of the blend), and it really shows in the wine. Notes of blackcurrant leaf here with ripe, red cherry fruits. At 10 years past the vintage the oak (50% new) is seamlessly integrated, adding a bit of spice that complements the Cabernet nicely. Already drinking well, this should continue to provide plenty of pleasure over the next decade.

While the 2014 vintage is certainly the best since 2010, the 2012 vintage nevertheless offers some very good wines at very attractive prices for near-term drinking. A couple of top second labels from the northern Graves illustrate the point. The **2012 La Parde de Haut-Bailly, Pessac-Léognan (\$24.99)** is soft and forward, made in a very approachable style. This is the second label of Haut-Bailly, made by the same team that produces the Grand Vin, from fruit sourced from the same vineyards. The quality is unmistakable here.



Originally a neighboring property, Château Tour Léognan became the second label of Château Carbonnieux in 1956. The **2012 Tour Léognan, Pessac-Léognan (\$19.99)** is typical of the vintage, ripe and round and easy drinking. Loads of sweet dark fruit with notes of mocha and spice. Try this beauty tonight.

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